



CITY OF LOS ALTOS

Sewer Service Charge

2020/21 Annual Report

June 2020

**CITY OF LOS ALTOS
SEWER SERVICE CHARGE
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. SEWER SERVICE CHARGE CALCULATION	2
2.1 Base Charge (Per EDU)	2
2.2 Usage Charge (Per Unit of Estimated Sewer Use).....	2
3. SEWER SERVICE CHARGE CALCULATION	3
4. WET SEASON MONTHS.....	4
5. SUMMARY OF LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS.....	5
6. LISTING OF SEWER SERVICE CHARGES	6
7. RESOLUTION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020/21	7

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Los Altos (the “City”) imposes a Sewer Service Charge to fund costs associated with the City’s sanitary sewer system in accordance with its Municipal Code Chapter 10.12. The City restructured the Sewer Service Charge in July 2013 to ensure a flow-of-funds for the on-going operation and maintenance, and to fund the upgrading and refurbishing of the City’s sanitary sewer system. The main objectives for updating the rate structure were to ensure a fair and equitable charge to all sewer users and to stabilize the charges to provide needed revenue.

A new study was completed in February 2018 to support increased rates beginning July 1, 2018 and ending June 30, 2023. The City Council adopted an Ordinance in July 2018 establishing the Sewer Service Charge to be applied to each of the succeeding five fiscal years, which is comprised of a base charge per equivalent dwelling unit, plus a usage charge per estimated sewer unit. The adopted rate structure is designed to reduce volatility in the City’s sewer revenue stream and equitably allocate costs to each customer class of sewer use.

The Sewer Service Charge is levied pursuant to the California Health and Safety Code, Sections 5471 et seq. and the City’s Municipal Code Chapter 10.12. Payment of the Sewer Service Charge for each parcel will be made in the same manner and at the same time as payments are made for property taxes. This report contains the necessary data required to establish the Sewer Service Charge and is submitted for filing in the office of the City Clerk, where it shall remain open for public inspection.

2. SEWER SERVICE CHARGE CALCULATION

The total annual Sewer Service Charge for a parcel will be the sum of the base charge plus the usage charge. The calculation for each charge is described in this section.

2.1 Base Charge (Per EDU)

The base charge is determined by multiplying the per equivalent dwelling unit (EDU) rate by the number of EDUs on each parcel. For residential parcels, 1.0 EDU is assigned for each dwelling unit (multi-family residential parcels included).

Parcels with non-residential structures or improvements shall also be assigned 1.0 EDU for the first 110 water units (or fraction thereof) of estimated sewer use for non-residential improvements on the parcel plus a number of additional EDUs (or fractions thereof) equal to the remaining estimated sewer use for non-residential improvements on the parcel divided by 110. A minimum of 1.0 EDU is assigned to each non-residential parcel or group of parcels associated with a shared meter.

Where multiple non-residential parcels share a common water meter, the equivalent dwelling units calculated based on water use measured by that meter shall be divided equally amongst the parcels sharing the meter.

2.2 Usage Charge (Per Unit of Estimated Sewer Use)

The usage charge is based on water consumption data provided by the California Water Service Company for the previous year. The three monthly billing periods which indicate the lowest total water consumption are selected as the wet seasons in that they represent a reasonable approximation of the amount of sewer usage. Water usage from the wet season months is averaged and multiplied by 12 to calculate estimated annual sewer usage.

Where actual monthly water consumption data is not available for a water account on a parcel (as when a structure(s) on the parcel is recently connected to a water system), sewer use is estimated as the average estimated sewer use for the prior year of all parcels in the same land use. For purposes of this section, land uses are classified as follows:

- Single-Family Home
- Condominium Unit
- Multi-Family Residence (two dwelling units)
- Multi-Family Residence (three to four dwelling units)
- Multi-Family Residence (five or more dwelling units)
- Church
- Commercial/Industrial
- Institutional
- Park
- School
- Government

3. SEWER SERVICE CHARGE CALCULATION

To provide the revenue to keep up with the increase in projected revenue needs, the City adopted an updated five-year rate structure in July 2018. Both the base charge and the usage charge per sewer unit will be increased annually each year. The following table shows the adopted rates through Fiscal Year 2022/23 based on the rate study.

Adopted Rates	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22	FY 2022/23
Per EDU (Base Charge)	\$267.69	\$275.72	\$283.99	\$292.51	\$301.29
Per Unit of Estimated Sewer Use (Usage Charge)	\$2.15	\$2.21	\$2.28	\$2.35	\$2.42
Percentage Increase over Prior Fiscal Year	2.5%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%

4. WET SEASON MONTHS

The “wet season months” are the three monthly billing periods for which the records of the California Water Service Company indicate the lowest total water consumption during that calendar year by parcels connected to the City’s sewer system that are serviced by the California Water Service Company.

In 2019, the City’s three lowest months for water use were January, February, and March. Therefore, these are the months used to calculate each individual parcel’s estimated annual sewer usage for Fiscal Year 2020/21.

The following table provides the total annual sewer usage for calendar year 2019, as provided by the California Water Service Company.

Calendar Year 2019 Total Water Consumption for the City of Los Altos (1,2)											
JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
117,138	104,674	91,459	122,226	229,306	287,783	328,528	363,944	351,356	311,373	266,836	209,062

(1) Data provided by the California Water Service Company for the City of Los Altos and certain parcels located within the Town of Los Altos Hills and unincorporated areas of the County that are connection to the City’s sewer system.

(2) One unit = 100 cubic feet of sewer use.

5. SUMMARY OF LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

The following summarizes the estimated annual sewer usage for properties that are connected to the City's sewer system for Fiscal Year 2020/21.

Land Use Classification	Number of Parcels (1)	Total Estimated Yearly Sewer Use (in Units) (1)	Average Sewer Use Per Parcel (2)
Single-Family Home	10,360	955,477	92
Condominium Unit	1,036	52,416	51
Multi-Family Residence (two units)	65	10,111	111
Multi-Family Residence (three to four dwelling units)	11	1,544	116
Multi-Family Residence (five or more dwelling units)	23	27,486	922
Church	22	23,075	382
Commercial/Industrial	448	175,768	200
Institutional	6	39,226	5250
Park	4	10,156	587
School	10	40,556	599
Government	10	12,113	159

- (1) Usage data includes all parcels in the City of Los Altos and in unincorporated Santa Clara County served by the City of Los Altos's sewer program. The City's program uses capacity and facilities provided to the program by the City of Mountain View to serve some parcels in the City of Los Altos. These parcels are charged a Sewer Service Charge by the City of Los Altos, and data for these parcels is included in the above table. The City of Los Altos compensates the City of Mountain View for access to the Mountain View sewer system by providing the Mountain View's sewer program with access to a similar volume of service from the Los Altos system. Parcels located in Mountain View, but connected to the City's sewer system, are receiving service from the Mountain View sewer program and are not included in the above table or subject to City's Sewer Service Charge. Additionally, the City of Los Altos sells sewer services, in bulk, to the Town of Los Altos Hills, and the Town uses these services to serve parcels located in Los Altos Hills. Usage by parcels in Los Altos Hills is not shown in the above table because these parcels are not subject to the Sewer Service Charge. Instead, the full cost of the services indirectly provided by the Town of Los Altos Hills parcels is covered by the direct payment to the City from the Town of Los Altos Hills. Costs of these services are not spread to parcels directly served by the City of Los Altos sewer program.
- (2) Average consumption based upon parcels where actual usage data was available. Developed properties that are connected to the City's sewer system, which water consumption information is not available, are charged at the average sewer use per parcel identified above.

6. LISTING OF SEWER SERVICE CHARGES

A list of parcels subject to the Sewer Service Charge as shown on the last equalized Property Tax Roll of the Assessor of Santa Clara County is on file in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Los Altos. The list contains a description of each parcel receiving such services and the amount of the charge for each parcel for Fiscal Year 2020/21.

7. RESOLUTION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020/21

The following page presents the Resolution approving the report of Sewer Service Charges for Fiscal Year 2020/21 and directing the filing of charges for collection by the Santa Clara County Tax Collector.